

Voyageurs National Park

Rendezvous
AT VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK

Living with Black Bears

Approximately 150 black bears live in Voyageurs National Park. These bears symbolize the wilderness quality of northern Minnesota and can be a memorable wildlife observation. Unfortunately, each summer numerous human-bear incidents occur. While human injuries are rare, black bears can cause significant property damage. Incidents often result in campsite closures and the trapping and relocation of bears.

Voyageurs National Park tries to provide an environment where bears can live with minimal human interference. Please do your part. Help prevent bear problems by following the procedures in this brochure. Report human-bear incidents to park personnel as soon as possible.

VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK

KABETOOGAMA LAKE
VISITOR CENTER
(218) 875-2111

ASH RIVER VISITOR CENTER
(218) 374-3221

RAINY LAKE VISITOR CENTER
(218) 286-5258

CRANE LAKE
(218) 993-2481



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History and Facts

NATURAL HISTORY

Black bears (*Ursus americanus*) are the smallest yet most abundant bear on the North American continent. The only bear found in Minnesota, they are quite



CINNAMON COLORED
BLACK BEAR.

common in the wooded northern part of the state. Typically black in color, they can also be brown or cinnamon colored. Adult male black bears are much larger than the females and weigh 250-300 lbs. and are 4-6' standing height on hind legs. Black bears have prominent ears, glossy coats and lack the shoulder hump characteristic of the grizzly bear. They are excellent swimmers and tree climbers. Black bears can live for 20 years in the wild.

FEEDING HABITS

Black bears are opportunistic omnivores, feeding primarily on vegetation, such as berries, seeds, grasses and forbs. Insects, fish and carrion are their source of protein. They travel great distances constantly in search of opportunities to feed their young and build fat for their long winter hibernation.

Considering their nature and extremely acute senses, it is not surprising that they are often attracted to human food sources — like garbage and camper's picnics!



BLACK BEAR FEASTING
ON LUSCIOUS BERRIES.

Wild bears are naturally afraid of humans. They lose this fear when they learn to associate humans with food. Food and garbage odors attract bears to campsites, picnic areas, cabins and even boats and cars.

Once habituated, bears become threats to people, property, and themselves. They alter their behavior and can be seen pan handling along roadsides, where they may be hit by cars, or begin seeking food in the day by raiding campsites. Bears can become such a nuisance they have to be trapped and relocated or in some cases killed by resource managers.

The solution is prevention. Help bears keep their fear of humans and stay alive by changing your habits.



BLACK BEARS ARE EXCELLENT SWIMMERS.